

6/9/10 Minutes

Haggerty MS Working Group

In attendance: Jeff Young, Jim Maloney, Janelle Bradshaw, Deb Henry, Mara Levine, Robyn Gaillard, Rowan Murphy, Ray McCann, Kevin McGonegal, Leslie Kramer, Susan Pemsler, Kathy Sampson, Meg Moloney, Mary Ann Fox

Superintendent Jeff Young (JY) started the meeting by reviewing a “Summary of Haggerty Next School Discussions” document, which Jim Maloney (JM) and JY prepared between the end of our last meeting on Monday, June 7 and this meeting.

“Five Themes” have emerged and JM and JY prepared a document that included the themes, as well as possible “Responses/Resolution Efforts:

**1.) JY: FRC Communication:** Working on protocols with FRC and Janelle and Kathy to reduce delays in notification of options and placement.

JM: We can have a parent night meeting in October when we go over the process parents have to go through to get students into a middle school.

JY: We hope to improve the transitional experience for students and families.

**2.) Potential Sister school/Haggerty connection:**

JY: One question that recurs: How can we ensure that the quality of education is the same at the sister school, and, thereby build parents’ confidence in their choices? Work with principal and staff at the sister school to educate them about the experiences the prospective students at the Haggerty have had. Training around supporting the inclusion of students in the same way that they are supported at the Haggerty. We wish to foster a co-community with Haggerty and the sister school.

At this moment in the conversation, a couple of parents requested that we pause to consider where we left off at Monday’s meeting. Parents were confused about the step between Monday and today’s meeting. After a brief discussion about process, JM and JY assured parents that their questions would be addressed when we got to number 5, and that perhaps theme number 5 could have been number 1.

Discussion regarding Peabody as possibly remaining our sister school involved questions about the ISP program. Parents were concerned that the sister school selected had the potential to meet the needs of the majority of Haggerty students.

Janelle: We were starting at the place of where are our kids now. If all the kids go over to the sister school than we will have an opportunity to have 4 strands of kids. Instead of the current 3 strands (2 ISP and one regular).

JY: It is clear that 2ISP and 1 regular has to change

Debbie: At a sister school there should be a philosophical match.

Mary Ann: Should there be an ISP at a sister school of ours?

JY: In a four-strand school you can be more flexible

Rowan: You have more choices with four strands. If you sell it that way to the Haggerty parents, they will more likely get on board.

JY: Choice is a strong value here. We are trying to make the sister school attractive enough so that the parents will want their kids to go there. We will do this by making a structure that makes it more seamless.

Mary Ann: Are we operating under the assumption that the 6<sup>th</sup> grade is going to go away?

Janelle: We would have to do another survey to see if the parents want to keep the sixth grade.

JY: Most middle school models are 6-8. Gives a three-year program as opposed to junior high model of 7-8 or 7-9. 6<sup>th</sup> grade tames the environment of junior high. This is what the research shows.

Leslie: Wouldn't it be great to have a model 6<sup>th</sup> grade program? We can take our show on the road.

Janelle: How do we make this transition easier for families, students, and teachers? We want to educate people about how to include students.

Debbie: I wanted my daughter to go to 6<sup>th</sup> grade here because of the program but if that program was somewhere else I would feel comfortable sending her to another school.

**At this point in the discussion, we jumped from theme #2 to theme #5.**

5.) JY: Goal is to deal with our capacity to process and deal with any unanticipated contingencies. Plan a program that addresses the needs of our students and families.

JM: If we had decided to go to another sister school that we don't currently have a relationship with, it would take a couple of years of conversation. Keeping Haggerty's current sister school is one step on the way - it is the path of least resistance. This is an effort to move it forward.

Janelle: We need to do something that says this is the plan. Where are we right now and could we make this work.

JM: The goal is to not just satisfy the 6<sup>th</sup> grade parents: We want to help all of the families feel comfortable that they made a good choice in Haggerty, and they will be able to go to a good middle school and a good high school. We hope parents would feel confident about the quality of the school where their child is guaranteed a spot.

JY: This is about a relationship with the sister school

Mary Ann: We don't want to waste 2 years if it is not going to work. Are we coming from a negative spot?

Kathy: Parents are saying the relationship with sister school is getting better.

JM: There is an active after-school program at the Gately Youth Center's Middle School Partnership Program, which is right behind Peabody. It is a great program.

JM: When we move to the next step, it is important to do that with sensitivity.

Janelle: They have Haggerty students already. We can start with how have transitions gone. How can we support you with Haggerty students?

JY: Probably they do some things better than you and you do some things better than them.

JM: Haggerty's current sister school is a very different school than it was 3 years ago. They are proud of the work they do.

JY: To summarize: FRC plans to reach out. Kathy is a great resource for us.

Mary Ann talked about short-term solution from her summary sheet.

JM: When we talk about special consideration we need to talk about what is good for all students, not just for Haggerty students. What Mary Ann wrote is close to JY's solutions.

Mary Ann: I am asking that we all know what is going on by August 1.

Mary Ann: Is what you outlined what we are walking away with?

JY: After this meeting, we are not going to give a firm proposal. We need to flesh out some more things. I am going to provide an update to the School Committee on June 15; I am not going to present them with a proposal tied up with ribbon.

**JY:** Do we agree that theme #2 is what we want to explore.

Everyone said: Yes

Debbie: Next we need to know what would make that relationship and our confidence in the program stronger.

4.) On K-6 vs. K-5 discussion. If we can build a strong program we would be able to live with a K-5 building.

Meg: Still premature only to consider the situation with only current sister school in mind.

Janelle: We first need to talk with our current sister school. If we get a sense that the sister school is not the best option we would have another school we could start conversations with another school.

Mary Ann: Why don't we start coordinating this now?

JY: We are doing the groundwork for it this year.

**JY summarizes and thanks everyone for their commitment to this work.**

- 1.) Forge a stronger sister school relationship, but not rule out a parent's individual right to opt elsewhere. (We have a choice system.)
- 2.) Define the attributes of a strong relationship.
- 3.) Improve outreach of FRC, explore solution to hardship cases (reduce delay in notification for this sixth grade class)
- 4.) Change in Haggerty K-6 to K-5 is dependent on who is sister school. (An issue for Haggerty's School Council to explore further.)